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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LISTS 11 DEMANDS BY NOVEMBER 3,
CARETAKER GOVERNMENT TAKES INITIAL STEPS

11. (SBU) On October 30, Awami League president Sheikh Hasina met with and challenged Caretaker Chief Adviser Ahmed to prove his neutrality by taking action by November 3 on 11 fronts:

A) The Chief Election Commissioner and three election commissioners must be removed, and all election officer appointments canceled down to the local level.

B) The voter list must be corrected and revised, and must include photographs of all registered voters.

C) All appointments, promotions, and retirement orders since July 1, 2006, should be nullified; all contractual appointments and appointments to sensitive positions canceled; and the attorney general must be removed and replaced with a consensus candidate.

D) Police loyal to the BNP and Jamaat Islami (JI) should be dismissed, and all police personnel in sensitive positions should be changed or reassigned.

E) Bangladesh Television and other state-owned media must give "proper coverage" to the Awami League, and all private radio and television stations which were started up in the last five years must cease broadcasting. Their owners and the sources of financing must be investigated.

F) All court cases filed after October 4, 2006, must be withdrawn and all people detained in such cases released.

G) Militants must be arrested, and fresh investigations initiated to prevent bombings, use of firearms and militancy.

H) All firearms licenses granted in the past two years must be canceled. Firearms will need to be collected and destroyed across the country.

I) Directives need to be issued to all airports, seaports and land border crossings to prevent the former ruling coalition's "corrupt ministers and lawmakers, leaders...businessmen and godfathers of criminals" from fleeing the country.

J) All development decisions, including approval of projects, allocation of property, project contracts and funding must be canceled.

K) Portraits of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia must be removed from all government offices immediately.

12. (SBU) Failure to meet these demands, Hasina said, would lead to the announcement at a November 3 rally of new agitation programs.

13. (SBU) After his meeting with Hasina, Ahmed announced the appointment cancellation of nine government secretaries whose contracts had been extended against normal civil service procedures, including Secretary of the President's Office and the Director General of the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion. He also shuffled 18 high-ranking bureaucrats, including the Home and Local Government secretaries. Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin remains in place. Ahmed's also office

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announced the immediate replacement of former Khaleda Zia's portrait with that of the new Chief Adviser in all government offices.

14. (SBU) Comment: The BNP has reportedly expressed strong objections to Ahmed's picks for Secretary to the Presidency and Principal Secretary for the Chief Adviser's Office, so arguments about the alleged partiality of appointments have already begun. Some of Hasina's demands are unreasonable or impractical, especially with a November 3 deadline and the threat of renewed nationwide agitation. The question remains whether Hasina's demands are designed to produce failure and justify a quick return to the streets, or whether they are subject to modification, especially if Ahmed does well in other key areas.

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